provisions. Moreover, unless the advance was made in great force, it was a dangerous thing to make it, for the Valley was divided longitudinally by the Massanutten Mountain and the forks of the Shenandoah River, and afforded to an able general infinite opportunities of skilful manoeuvring, as was afterwards abundantly demonstrated by Stonewall Jackson. Furthermore, to debouch, from the Valley and occupy Gordonsville, the key to the railroad system of centra] Virginia, was no easy matter, and involved necessarily a dangerous exposure of the communications of the force thus emerging through the upper gaps into central Virginia. On the whole, then, the Shenandoah Valley offered no special advantages as a route for the Northern invader to pursue. At the same time, it was obviously undesirable that the Valley should be occupied permanently by the Federal forces, and the Confederate Government entrusted its defence to one of their ablest officers, General Joseph E. Johnston, and instructed him to hold Harper's Ferry, where the Shenandoah River falls into the Potomac. Johnston, however, was not long in discovering that Harper's Ferry was an untenable position, and soon evacuated the post, which was at once occupied by General Patterson, to whom

General Scott had entrusted the defence of thin part of the frontier. Johnston fixed his headquarters at Winchester, and observed the river from Harper's Ferry to Martinsburg. His force, which was called the Army of the Shenandoah, numbered at the beginning of July about 11,000 men, with 20

[1] Johnston's *Narrative*, 31, 33; 2 W. R., 187, 487,